



# Safety Planning

*A guide for supporters of survivors of domestic violence and/or stalking*

**Managing an abusive relationship is difficult. While a survivor cannot control the behavior of the abuser, there are ways they can manage their actions within the relationship and plan for safety. Equally important, there are ways you can be a support person for them. When supporting a survivor of domestic violence or stalking there are important things to keep in mind:**

- The survivor knows their relationship best. They know what is safe. They get to decide what steps are taken.
- Insisting a survivor leave the relationship is not helpful. Only the survivor can decide when leaving is the right thing. Making demands will only isolate them.
- When a survivor is leaving a violent relationship they are in the greatest danger. Respecting their timeline and encouraging them to take appropriate steps is important.
- Abusers work to isolate their victims. Letting a friend, family member or colleague know that you support them without judgement and trust their decisions may be the most important action that you can take.
- If you are concerned about a friend or family member it is important to let them know but to do so appropriately. Talk to them in private when the abuser is not present. Avoid group “interventions” where the survivor may feel overwhelmed. Do NOT confront the abuser—this places the survivor at risk. Let them know you support them and are a safe person. Tell them about WEAVE.

## **If You Witness a Violent Assault**

- Call 911 and avoid intervening physically.
- Go to a safe place, if possible.
- If your safety is threatened, stay in rooms with an escape route. Try to avoid rooms where weapons may be stored.
- Encourage the survivor to contact WEAVE’s 24-Hour Support & Information Line for support and resources—916.920.2952.

## **If Your Friend/Family Member is Preparing to Leave a Violent Relationship**

- Discourage them from telling their partner. Loss of control of the relationship may escalate violence.
- Advise them to leave when the abuser is away from home.
- Help them identify a safe place to stay. If confidential shelter is needed, call WEAVE’s Support Line at 916.920.2952 for information.
- Encourage them to consider applying for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order. WEAVE’s Support Line can assist you with additional information including accessing legal assistance through WEAVE.
- Help them develop a safety plan including a list of items to have accessible.
- If they are leaving with their children, advise them to contact the District Attorney’s Child Abduction Unit or private attorney to alert law enforcement that the children are safe and with them.

## **After They Leave**

- Encourage them to know how to access emergency confidential shelter if needed.
- Advise them to keep a journal of threats from the abuser.
- Let them know that they may qualify for Victim Witness Compensation that may pay for counseling, changing of locks, etc.
- Encourage them to do custody exchanges in public locations.



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## Helping Your Friend/Family Member Plan for their Children's Safety

- Encourage them to teach their children to call 911 if needed.
- Support them in educating their children in how to leave if violence is occurring and who safe people are to contact for help.
- Advise them to provide copies of restraining orders to their childcare provider and children's school.

## Helping Your Friend/Family Member Stay Safe at Work

- *Victims of domestic violence and stalking have employment protections.* Tell them to inform their supervisor or Human Resources about domestic violence and/or stalking. Let them know to ask for safety accommodations, if available.
- Encourage them to provide Human Resources with a copy of the restraining order and picture of the abuser.

## Safety and Technology

- Help them set up a "safe" email account that the abuser does not know about. They can email copies of documents, police reports, etc. to the account for safekeeping and use it to create a digital log of abusive incidents. Advise them to not have an app if they abuser has access to their phone.
- Suggest they change passwords frequently. If their partner requires access, they should keep a list of key accounts to change if they leave. Set up alerts to be notified if others try to access their accounts.
- Help them understand the location setting for apps that have geo-tagging features that may show their location. Be aware of other devices with location settings (i.e. Find My Phone, car and phone GPS) that the abuser may be able to access.
- Encourage them to understand the privacy settings on social media to manage who has access to your information and who can contact them.

## Additional Tips & Resources

If your friend or family member is considering leaving or may need to flee quickly, encourage them to assemble key documents they may need, including:

### Originals:

- Birth certificate(s)
- ATM/Credit Cards & Checkbook
- Social Security Card(s)
- Insurance Card(s)
- Legal paperwork (DVRO, custody, immigration, etc.)
- Car title/registration
- Marriage Certificate

### Copies:

- Bank Account Numbers/Statements
- Log-ins and passwords
- Tax Returns
- Immunization Records
- Lease/rental agreements
- Emergency contacts—phone numbers & email

### Other Items:

- Spare home and car keys
- Cell Phone
- Prescriptions
- Cash
- Emergency clothing
- Diaper bag



24-Hour Support & Information Line: 916.920.2952

Business Line: 916.448.2321

[www.weaveinc.org](http://www.weaveinc.org)